1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

by his hacking at a piece of wood with his knife, or by throwing stones. Even in this state nobody would destroy another's property, and only a savage foreigner like Tempa would hit or throw stones at people; but on occasion people might hit animals, or throw things at them. Normally people only beat animals if they stray into cultivated land; to hit them on any other occasion is considered cruel. *Shadong ding* is considered to be a natural and almost automatic state, like hunger; it is not caused by a supernatural and no notice is paid to a person in a temper.

Except for shame, hunger and sexual desire the Lepchas do not equate physical sensations and emotional states. Neither blushing nor fainting for emotional reasons are recognised. Squeamishness varies considerably with the individual. Some people are frightened of corpses; the Mandal was unwilling to approach the dead bodies of his first wife and of his parents. A few, such as Pembu, cannot even bear to watch a wound being dressed. Such squeamishness is considered rather stupid; and a certain admiration is expressed for those people who have the courage to rip open the corpse of a pregnant woman, and take out the foetus, which has to be done before the body is disposed of. A queasy person is not made fun of nor considered disgraced by his sensitiveness; but some admiration is felt for those people who do not manifest it, rather similar to the European admiration for a person with 'plenty of guts'.

The disgust reactions of the Lepchas are remarkably low. They will not avoid walking in human or animal excrement and will merely rub their feet on the grass if they should do so. People will clean babies often with their bare hands; and I have seen women collect the mucus from a baby with whooping cough in their hands and just rub them on the ground. They have no disgust for menstruation though they have some fear of it; if the menstrual blood falls into food or water it would be fatal to humans or animals though it nourishes fishes; a menstruating woman is not debarred from any action. After menstruation a woman will always wash both her body and her clothes, a thing which Tibetans neglect to do; the Lepchas consider, and correctly, that the Tibetans are far dirtier than they, and a number of anecdotes are told about the Tibetan lack of attention to their bodies and their various filthy, but to the Lepchas amusing, personal habits. The Lepchas themselves are extremely dirty on the whole and particularly the laymen; lamas shave and wash their heads and also their hands before making

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

853 up to puberty. Gongyop's only surviving son took the breast until he was ten; and Pursang, Chano's second 'son', was suckled by a childless aunt[4] until her death, which occurred when he was eleven.

853 Babies are nursed continuously whenever they cry. Very young children are held in the mother's arms and she nurses them stand-
854 ing; but when the babies get a certain control of movement the favourite nursing position is for the mother to sit cross-legged while the baby lies freely on its back in the mother's lap. The mother leans forward slightly so as to bring the breast within reach, and supports the baby slightly with one arm. The suckling situation is pleasant and comfortable, but save perhaps for patting the baby's bottom gently with one hand the mother does not pet or play with the child and will usually talk to people standing by while the baby is drinking. I never saw a mother withdraw the breast until the baby had quite finished. At night the baby's bedding is so placed as always to be within reach of the mother's breast.

After the age of about ten months a baby does not cry for food if it is in its mother's arms but claws at the front of her dress in an attempt to undo it; only if the desired food is then withheld does it start whimpering. If it is being held by other people, whether men or women, it will also claw at the front of its carrier's clothes; if the mother is absent the baby can often be quieted by letting it lay its head against the warm body of its carrier.

[753] Nursing mothers should not eat bones or other hard things or else they will lose their teeth; apart from this there are no diet restrictions unless the baby falls seriously ill (accidents, infantile diarrhoea or teething trouble are not considered serious illnesses). In such cases the mother must avoid salt, meat, and *chi*; divination will discover whether wet or dry rice is more suitable for her, and she will live on that together with buckwheat, a *lavatera* leaf, and butter. Besides this she has to avoid sitting in the sun or in damp places. None of these restrictions apply to the father.

854 During the first year of their lives young children are washed in warm water morning and evening; after that they are washed once

[4] I was told that this woman had never borne a child, but the people who told me about her were not near relations, and it is possible that she had borne a still-born infant or one who had died very young. The death of very young children is not taken much notice of, and often not remembered except by the parents. The three people I discussed the matter with however all declared that this aunt had never borne a child.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

a day until they can walk and look after themselves. Except at these washings the baby's body is not cleaned. Children do not usually have any fitted clothes until they can walk, but are instead wrapped in loose cloths. 854

The teaching of sphincter control is meant to start at the age of three months when the children are taken out on to the balcony at regular intervals; they should learn to cry when they want to be taken out and by the time they can crawl should be able to crawl there by themselves. This is, however, an ideal rather than a real statement; sphincter control and bodily cleanliness are not regarded as of emotional importance, and some quite big children refuse to accept the discipline and excrete inside the house, especially if the house has bamboo flooring. Children aged three or over who cannot or will not learn sphincter control are considered to show a bad prognosis; when they grow up they 'will show forth a bad heart (disposition)'. If big children are dirty they may be given a smack or other slight punishment; but as often as not no notice will be taken and the dirt just cleared away by some older person. Only if the child spoils or dirties somebody else's property will he be severely punished. When a child can move about by itself it is taught to go outside to relieve itself; it is always accompanied by an older person till it is quite big to keep away the scavenging dogs and pigs. It is cleaned, and taught to clean itself with sticks and leaves. 863

Lepchas say that children should start noticing things at two months, start crawling at six months, stand when they are a year old, and walk three months later. This time-table seems to me to be in point of fact over-quick and none of the children under eighteen months that I saw could walk. The child is helped to stand and walk a little by its elder siblings. If a baby learns to walk early it is a sign that the next child is coming soon. Children are not expected to talk until they are two years old, and certainly not before they can walk; but they understand certain baby sounds, such as *ka-ka*—don't—*aah-dji*—take care—and *bam-bam*—keep quiet—in their second year. 856

The baby's first tooth should appear at the age of eight months and it should have all its milk teeth within the year unless by any misfortune a pregnant woman has looked at the baby, in which case the baby will not teeth until the woman is delivered and her child also teeths. It is most important that with a boy the teeth should come through the lower jaw first and with a girl through the 826

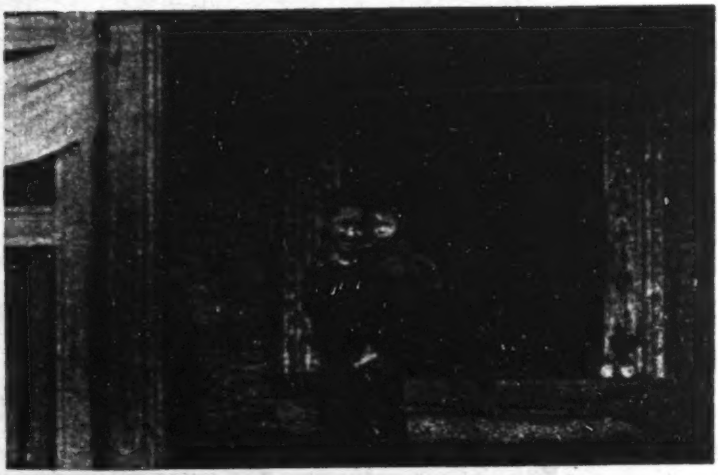
1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

upper. Should the contrary occur it will indicate that the child is a victim of the evil supernatural Sumoo Thor. When such people grow up all their domestic animals will fail; if the child is a girl her husband will die young and she will be left an early widow; if a boy all his children will die in infancy. There is no unanimity as to whether parents would inform their children when they grow older of such evil prognosis; the general opinion is that though parents themselves would not tell the children the elder siblings are liable to know of the fact and to mention it in the course of family squabbles. Tobgé's sister is believed to have Sumoo Thor as she has pointed teeth in the front of her lower jaw. People have teased her about this but she has replied that she 'doesn't care, and anyhow her odd teeth are the result of a *tamtoom* and have nothing to do with Sumoo Thor.' There is nothing to do to avert the misfortunes from teeth arising in the wrong place; it is the destiny following a child from its previous incarnation. Similarly moles above the level of the eyes in boys and below them in girls portray the presence of Sumoo Thor; moles in the contrary positions are lucky.

A baby should not be given either bear or frog to eat or it will be late in speaking. You can tell from the way a child cries when it is six months old if it is going to be dumb or not.

Until children start walking they do not usually have clothes at all; in the house they are wrapped up in warm folded cloths, not so tightly as to restrict their movements, and usually lie on their back on the floor or raised bed-partition. For the first month or six weeks and occasionally longer they are carried in the arms; after that they are carried on the back of a parent or elder sibling. There are two positions in which the child is held on the back; the most usual is a semi-foetal one with the enveloping cloth catching the child under the knees which are folded up to the body so that the child only touches its carrier from the knees to the feet and with the upper part of the body. Occasionally, however, children, especially when they have passed one year, are fastened with their legs spread on the hips of the carrier. The baby is completely enveloped in a big cloth folded three or four times, which goes round the baby's body and is fastened round the front of the carrier. It always needs the help of a second person to place a baby on the carrier's back; the carrier supports the baby from behind with his or her hands and the helper folds the cloth round and supports the baby while the carrier ties it. The enveloping cloth usually comes up to the neck and the baby's head lolls com-

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5



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PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Above : Chudo with his youngest daughter in the monastery porch.
Below : Tafoor, his wife, Chimpet, the eldest and youngest daughter.

[facing p. 296]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

854 pletely freely; sometimes, however, if it is sunny and the baby is sleeping the cloth will be pulled out over the baby's head so as to support the head more firmly against the body of the carrier.

For the first eighteen months or two years at the smallest reckoning the baby is continually carried when out of doors and is only put on the floor inside its own house. Unless the baby is a first or only child it should be able to walk slightly by about two years and should not need carrying after thirty months, if it is in good health. Of course if the children are ill they will be carried much later; and the youngest child, or an only child, is liable to be carried very much longer. When babies start to crawl they are usually laid somewhere near the mother while she is working, or near somebody else who can keep an eye on them. It occasionally happens that babies will crawl to the fire and burn or scald themselves; Aga's son was scalded and Chelim has a permanent scar from burning. It is, however, very seldom that crawlers get wounded in this way among the Lepchas; among the Nepali Major Morris says that there is scarcely a grown-up who does not carry scars from childhood burns.

It is considered that the use of a cradle would be fatal to Lepcha children, and they are normally never used. There is, however, one exception to this rule; the family line of Mrs. Datoop have the custom of employing Nepali cradles (these are small cradles on rockers which can be carried); she herself was reared in one and reared all her children in them. She is the most independent, self-willed, and competent woman in Lingthem; of her three sons the eldest, Pembu, is exceptionally nervous, and the other two notably independent. The daughters, who have married back into their mother's community, I saw too little of to judge. Since there is only this one family, and since Mrs. Datoop is herself such a strong personality, it is quite impossible to decide whether the use of the cradle, with its somewhat greater freedom of movement and its slight restriction of contact with other bodies, had any influence on the formation of the characters of these rather exceptional people.

Except in the first few weeks of its life a child who is not an eldest or only child does not receive exclusive attention from its mother; the mother is the only woman who feeds it, but a great part of its time is usually spent in the company of elder siblings. Children are more often carried by women than men; in a mixed family the elder daughters spend much more time looking after their younger siblings than their brothers do. If, however, the first child

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

854 is a boy a great deal of the care of the next child will fall on him;
857 Chimpet's parents accounted for his rather small stature by the fact that he had to carry his sister, two years younger than himself. This sister in her turn shared with her mother the care of the two baby girls; only when one was ill with chicken-pox, or when her mother wanted her help, did Chimpet have to act as nurse. Fathers
854 often carry their children on their backs, especially if they are going a long journey; men nurse children, holding them in their arms or on their laps; but I never saw a baby tied on to the back of any man except their father, grandfather, or elder brother. Women on the other hand always appear willing to carry any baby, even if they are completely unrelated.

During the first few weeks the baby sleeps in its mother's arms; afterwards it is given its own mattress beside its mother, with the mother's breast always within reach. There has apparently never been a case of a mother overlaying her baby. During the first few
[833] weeks of a baby's life the parents copulate on the side and *a retro* but return fairly soon to the preferred prone position. It sometimes happens that when the baby becomes capable of movement it feels its parents' bodies and pats them while they are copulating. I have no leads as to what psychological effect, if any, this has on the children; even those older children and adults who remember lactating do not appear to remember feeling their parents copulating; I only heard about such behaviour from the parents of young children.

Children should not cry. If a child starts whimpering some attempt is usually made to find out why; if it is hungry or sleepy or uncomfortable an effort is made to gratify the desire it expresses. Should this be impossible somebody tries to distract the child's attention by waving something bright—a flower or a piece of paper—in front of it, and then giving it to the child to hold. Should this fail the baby is usually walked up and down, while the carrier gently taps its bottom; this treatment appears to be very soothing to Lepcha babies. If bigger babies cry they may be threatened that 'a Tibetan will come with his big bag to take you away, or with his dagger to kill you', and even if they do not understand the words, the tone of voice will frighten and hush it. Grown-ups and older children are quite unscrupulous in using bogies, in which they themselves do not believe, to quiet younger children. Only babies believe in the kidnapping or murdering foreigner, in the big bear round the corner, in the tiny Sang-rong *moong*.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Lepcha babies are in fact extremely quiet and I practically never heard one cry; often during the day-long ceremonies there would be five or six children under three present, and one would really not be conscious of their presence. Even when children can move about they are remarkably quiet; and the complete absence of fidgeting is one of the most noticeable characteristics of Lepcha children.

The mental reactions of Lepcha babies seemed to me very slow. Often a baby under a year old would catch hold of my finger; after about half a minute it would recognise that I was a stranger and start whimpering; but quite a little more time would pass before it would let go of me. Babies have far more confidence when they are tied on to the back of an elder person than when they are held on the lap or are on the ground. I frequently dressed small wounds and washed the eyes of babies fastened on a back without their showing the slightest fear or making any noise, whereas when they were held in the arms or seated in the lap they were much more nervous; indeed when parents brought up their babies for medical attention I found it was much easier to treat them if the babies were first put on their backs.

It is practically only after nightfall and on the rare occasions when its guardian has work to do inside the house that babies are laid on the ground. Unless its guardian can keep a constant eye on it babies under the age of three are all the time strapped on somebody's back, irrespective of the work the guardian may be doing; neither grown-ups nor elder children appear to be impeded by the burden of a baby. Lepcha babies spend a great deal of their time in the first three years of their life learning to abandon themselves completely passively to the movements of their active carriers. It is a common sight to see a woman pounding rice—a very violent exercise which necessitates alternately straining the body and raising the arms and then bending sharply almost double—with her baby strapped on her back and possibly sleeping; the baby's head lolls in every direction with each movement.

Youngest or only children are usually carried much longer than other babies and consequently have an even longer training in complete passivity. In a mixed gathering I always found it easy to spot youngest or only children, partly by their timidity and their fear of leaving their elders, and partly by their insistent demands for attention and the bad-tempered crying in which they indulged if this attention was not given—types of behaviour ordinary

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

855 Lepcha children do not manifest. The extra timidity and lack of self-reliance seems to persist amongst such children until they are themselves parents. Amongst adults I did not notice any consistent type of behaviour which would indicate an only child, but the youngest, if there were elder siblings living, seemed to carry a great deal of their attitude of reliance on their parents over to their elder siblings until relatively late in life. The Lepchas agree that a youngest child is generally the best loved and most spoilt and given the best food, but they did not consider that there was any consistent difference in character between the youngest and other children ; some might be cleverer than their elders, others duller.

854 Babies are very little talked to, and when they are it is usually in baby language. They are patted and kissed quite a lot. Kissing—the pressing of the lips on to another's cheek—is exclusively a pattern of behaviour between adults and young children. It forms no part of adult sexual behaviour. Adults who have been in the relationship of parent and child click their tongues at one another when they meet after a prolonged absence. Occasionally a woman will play with a baby's lips and tongue with her own tongue—a pastime both parties appear to enjoy ; but by far the most common stimulation of children is patting their bottoms while they are being carried on a person's back ; both men and women do this almost automatically when they are walking about or standing talking while carrying a baby ; the patting is gentle and rhythmic.

Until a child is fairly well developed its parents do not encourage it to acquire physical independence and body techniques, chiefly I think on account of the long distances people have to go to reach their fields ; a toddling and stumbling baby is far more of a handicap than a carried one. Elder siblings are more likely to encourage a baby in walking and balance, as the baby is a far greater burden and drawback to a child of six or seven than to an adult. The Lepchas consider that the backwardness of only children is due to the fact that they have no elder siblings to encourage and teach them.

While a baby is still at the breast its chief diet is pounded grain cooked in water or milk. When they have all their teeth they are given little pieces of meat, but only as titbits and not as the main part of the meal. They are given fruits as they ripen. After about [252] the age of two they are given popped corn and cooked grain to nibble while they are hungry, and from about that age they start getting a sip of *chi*.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

By the time a Lepcha baby is three it is already a recognisable member of its society, and the vast majority have the warm, sensuous, and fundamentally optimistic character which is typical of the Lepchas in later life. The child has an almost complete reliance on all the older members of its group; it has been trained physically and mentally to yield to its elders, who in their turn will gratify as quickly as possible all its expressed wishes. It has come to expect from the rest of the society a rather negligent and impersonal but consistent kindness; unpleasant sensations, and especially hunger, have been reduced to a minimum. Except under extraordinary circumstances a child is never alone nor is it allowed to cry without receiving attention. The training in cleanliness is not given any strong emotional importance, nor are any bodily functions in any way a subject for embarrassment or shocked shame; the impetus to restraint is chiefly social approval. The child receives very early a notion of fear from the voices and expressions of those around him; these fears are soon centred round certain words—devils, bears, tigers, snakes, Tibetans, strangers. But except for the accident of death, an unweaned child is unlikely to have undergone any obviously traumatic experience; the usually delayed weaning and birth of a younger sibling is likely to be the first really frightening experience. To my mind the chief formative influences in the earliest years of the life of a Lepcha child are firstly continuous physical satisfaction, secondly the learning of passivity, thirdly the impersonal attitude of the majority of parents, and finally the looking to elder siblings as much as, and even more than, to the parents for attention and help. The relying on elder siblings as though they were parents is certainly a major force in adult life. It is, I think, the habits and memories of this prolonged and satisfactory infancy which support the children through the less pleasant educative years of later childhood.

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In Lepcha an infant in arms is called *ing-ha*, a child that can walk *a-kup*. The word *ing-ha* is only used in this connection, but the word *a-kup* can be used as a suffix to any noun to indicate that the thing referred to is smaller than usual; a *ban kup* is a little knife, a *li kup* a little house. I think this linguistic point is of importance, as an indication of the attitude held by Lepchas towards children: they are *little adults*, and as such bound by adult rules; they are not,

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1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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METHODS OF CARRYING CHILDREN

Tafoor's two middle daughters.

Tafoor and his youngest daughter: jiroong behind.

[Facing p. 304]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

jewels of any women in Lingthem—and also very considerable generosity. She practically supports the children of Pargeut, who is distantly related to her husband (they share a common grandmother) and acts more like their mother than their own mother does. The consequence was that she was the only person who had the confidence of Kondé.[5] When Kondé was having her very painful sores dressed Mrs. Datoop would hold and soothe her with an altogether surprising physical gentleness and tact which was unparalleled among other Lepcha women.

No scandal had ever been attached to Mrs. Datoop's name but she had the reputation of being highly sexed and all her potential *oong-op* have taken full advantage of the relationship.

For four generations Mrs. Datoop's family had the peculiarity of rearing their children in cradles. She was so reared and so were all her children, but Pembu her eldest son has not used one for his own child.

Pembu.

Pembu was born in 1908 and was weaned at the age of two. As a child he was exceptionally frightened and nervous of strangers: indeed he is to this day. As a young child he was very frequently and seriously ill. When he was older up to the age of ten he used to sulk if reprimanded or punished and threaten to kill himself by jumping into the fire or from a high place. The parents would not try to restrain him; they would say 'If such a child wants to kill himself he can.' Sometimes he would run away for the day to an 'uncle's' but he always came back of his own accord of an evening.

At the age of five[6] he was sent to Gangtok as a servant for the Maharajah; the community has to furnish perpetually two boys for this work. In Gangtok he lived with an 'aunt' Kafermu, a woman who had at that time no children. He used to come home yearly for a holiday. The first year he was there he was very miserable but the second time he returned happily enough. Mrs. Datoop said that all the time he was away or when he was ill she was always very anxious and unhappy. When Pembu was about fifteen he quarrelled with his 'uncle' who complained to the Maharajah and Pembu came home for good. Datoop and his wife were glad to have their son back but regretted the cause of his return. On his

[5] See Chapter Twelve, pp. 322–323.

[6] So he says: but as has been pointed out, Lepchas have no number sense, and I think he was probably older.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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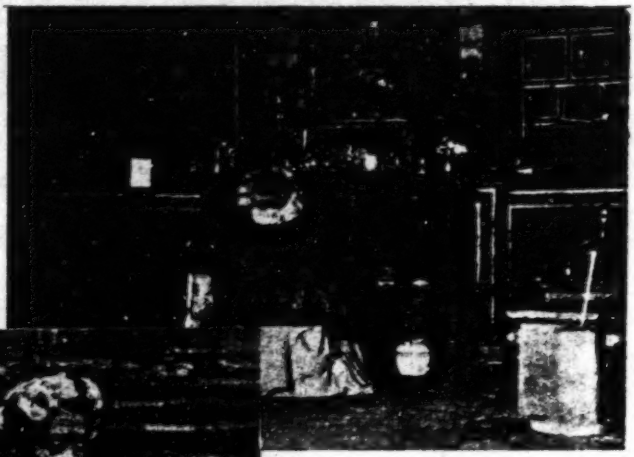

The Nunjimu attempting to induce a state of trance.

[778]

After the divination. Note the special woollen wreath worn by the Nunjimu; also the drum and bell which she is holding.

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The sick child. This photograph also illustrates the normal method of carrying babies.

[facing p. 124]

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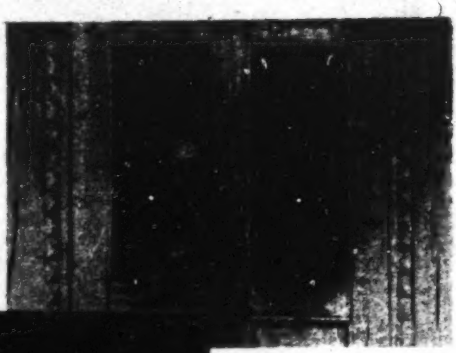

Happy family.

[205]

Lepcha girl.

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Tafoor's two daughters.

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Baby, having overeaten at luncheon.

[facing p. 210]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

865 flower," or show it some other thing to attract its attention.
[861] When it is old enough to understand what is said it may sometimes be necessary to frighten it: *Kunjyong di-nong* is a phrase commonly used for this purpose, and may be roughly translated as, "Look out! the bogey man is after you!"; but apart from this, it is very generally believed that it is wrong to frighten young children.

[856] The baby starts to crawl when it is about six months old,
●854 but it is not stood up until it is about a year, three or four months after which it commences to walk. Inside the house the baby is usually left to crawl about at its own free will: otherwise it is carried on someone's back, with its legs straddled round the waist, until it is about two-and-a-half years old, or even later if it is a youngest child. When the mother is working in the fields the baby remains in position on her back, where it soon learns to sleep peacefully while being constantly bumped about. Inside the house one of
[857] the other children will usually keep an eye on it; otherwise the parents will take turns in doing this. Baskets and cradles are seldom used: when it is necessary to put the baby down it is merely placed on a cloth on the floor or ground; but it is never swaddled. I should say that the average Lepcha child is much more carefully looked after than the corresponding Nepali child. It is very unusual to see a Gurkha without scars on the head, the result of falling into the fire as a baby; but I never saw a single case of this amongst the Lepchas. It may possibly be due to the fact that in Lepcha
[354 houses the hearth is raised about a foot above the level of
171] the floor, where it is thus out of reach of very small children, whereas the Nepali hearth is generally on the same level as the ground.

856 A baby can always toddle about before it starts to talk; and from the sounds it makes, when it is about four or five months old, it is easy to judge whether it will start to speak at the normal time. The speech of an average child, however, will not be intelligible until it is three. Up to this
[198] time it is spoken to in a special baby language, of which

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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41. Lepcha mother carrying her baby

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42. The baby in the cradle

[End Plate 17]